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# WHY DO CONSUMERS INTEGRATE ANTI-BRAND COMMUNITIES IN THE INTERNET?

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## **Bibliographic Note**

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## Abstract

Over the last few decades, consumers have become increasingly negative about brands. This phenomenon has become even more difficult to manage with the emergence of anti-brand communities on the internet. Thus, in the empirical study we proposed to study the phenomenon of anti-brand communities on the Internet, in particular we focus on investigating the reasons why individuals integrate these communities.

There is already research on the nature of anti-brand communities, the relationships established in those communities, the various types of anti-brand sites and their impact on brand image. However, these studies only explored anti-brand sites, so our study is the first to assume that currently anti-brand communities on the Internet may no longer be concentrated on websites.

In this way, it was necessary to investigate the brands that attract more anti-brand communities on the Internet and on which platforms these communities are concentrated. After conducting these two interdependent and sequential studies, we answer the main question of this research: What are the reasons why consumers are included in anti-brand communities?

Thus, we conclude that Apple is the brand that attracts more consumers with negative feelings, and the main reasons they do not like brands is the quality of the services / products and the working conditions offered by the companies. On the other hand, these consumers feel that by joining an anti-brand community they are fighting against brands with other individuals who have the same ideologies.

Finally, with this study, we conclude that the sex, age and country of origin of consumers influence these to integrate anti-brand communities. Being that the will of the consumers in integrating an anti-brand community depends on the intensity of the hatred that they feel for the brands.

**Keywords:** negative feelings about brands, hatred for brands, anti-brand communities on the internet

## Resumo

Nas últimas décadas assiste-se ao aumento das emoções negativas dos consumidores em relação às marcas. Este fenómeno tornou-se ainda mais difícil de gerir com o surgimento de comunidades anti-marcas na internet. Assim, neste estudo empírico propusemo-nos a estudar o fenómeno das comunidades anti-marcas na Internet, em particular focamo-nos em investigar as razões pelas quais os indivíduos integram essas comunidades.

Já existe pesquisa sobre a natureza das comunidades anti-marcas, as relações estabelecidas nessas comunidades, os vários tipos de sites anti-marcas e o impacto destes na imagem da marca. Mas estes estudos só exploraram os sites anti-marcas, assim o nosso estudo é o primeiro a pressupor que atualmente as comunidades anti-marcas na internet podem já não estarem concentradas nos websites.

Desta forma, foi necessário investigar as marcas que atraem mais comunidades anti-marcas na Internet e em que plataformas essas comunidades estão concentradas. Depois de realizarmos estes dois estudos interdependentes e sequenciais respondemos à principal questão desta investigação: Quais são os motivos que levam os consumidores a integrarem comunidades anti-marca?

Assim, concluímos que a Apple é a marca que atrai mais consumidores com sentimentos negativos, sendo que os principais motivos pelos quais eles não gostam das marcas é a qualidade dos serviços/produtos e as condições laborais oferecidas pelas empresas. Por outro lado, estes consumidores sentem que ao integrarem uma comunidade anti-marca estão a lutar contras as marcas com outros indivíduos que têm as mesmas ideologias.

Finalmente, concluímos que o sexo, a idade e o país de origem dos consumidores influencia estes a integrarem comunidades anti-marcas. Sendo que a vontade dos consumidores em integrar uma comunidade anti-marca depende da intensidade do ódio que sentem pelas marcas.

**Palavras-chaves:** sentimentos negativos pelas marcas, ódio pelas marcas, comunidades anti-marcas na internet

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## Introduction and relevance of the study

Numerous psychological studies have concluded that negative information is more memorable, more prominent, more deeply processed and more plausible than positive information. Negative brand feelings are more common than positive feelings, an average of 55% and 45% between positive and negative relationships, respectively. Negative emotions are also more precious than positive ones, because escaping from danger is more critical to the survival than experiencing a positive emotion, such as increasing the sense of pleasure (Aaker, 1996; Fournier & Alvarez, 2013). Negative emotions thus play a relevant role in consumer relationships with brands. In this way, empirical studies on negative brand feelings are still very scarce in comparison to this theme's importance to management (Krishnamurthy & Kucuk, 2009; Zarantonello et al., 2016).

In this way, in recent decades, there have been countless negative feelings about brands with very significant impacts on companies and especially on the value of brands, so it is extremely important to be able to deal with them in the context of management (Zarantonello et al., 2016). Low cost airlines, such as Ryanair, have been heavily criticized for poor service, unreliable safety conditions and a poor customer care. Apple has been embroiled in labor scandals with its logistics chain in China due to weak working conditions. These examples figure as a small sample of the scandals surrounding the decline in brand reputation over the recent years.

Today, as a reaction against capitalism, there is growing opposition to transnational brands and corporate globalization. Several studies prove that in little more than a decade the number of anti-brand websites has grown exponentially. On the other hand, this phenomenon is already taken very seriously by the management of companies, in the international panorama has already been observed, most likely will continue to watch, some organizations that have bought sites that denigrate its image. Thus, they avoided spreading the negative impact of anti-brand sites on brand value (Hollenbeck & Zinkhan, 2006). In this way, consumers oppose global brands and express, mainly, concerns about corporate practices related to labor, environmental and human rights issues.

As a result, with the growing increase of negative feelings regarding the brands and the increase of the phenomenon of opposition to the capitalism is seen an increase of the communities anti-brand. As these are increasingly present in our society, we would expect

that there would be numerous academic studies on them. However, the literature available that studies anti-brand communities and anti-brand sites is very scarce. Academic research has not yet discovered the nature of these sites and the impact they have on consumption patterns, which will directly impact brand value (Krishnamurthy & Kucuk, 2009). Thus, this research will focus on the study of anti-brand communities on the internet; mainly identify the main reasons that lead consumers to expend effort to integrate in these communities.

# **Literature revision**

To understand anti-brand communities this literature review will explore all the components of this phenomenon in the literature. First, you need to understand what a brand is and how consumers create feelings (positive and negative), relationships such as brands and hatred for brands. Subsequently, it will be necessary to analyze the impact of the internet, especially the social networks, on consumer relations with brands. Finally, characterize anti-brand communities; demonstrate the reasons why individuals integrate these communities and their implications for management.

## **Chapter 1 - Consumer feelings about brands**

### **1.1. Brand-consumer relations**

Currently, there is still an excessive competition among competitors, contrary to what happened in the past, there is more supply than demand. For every need, there subsists a multiplicity of products, with very similar functional attributes, to suppress it. Thus, brand management has become essential to obtain a long-term competitive advantage over competitors (Louro & Cunha, 2001). While all products or services may be reproduced, trademarks are not easily imitated because of their intangible elements, such as brand personality.

The brand as an identifier of the owner of a property is already a very old phenomenon, resumes the discoveries. However, since the mid-XIX century, with advances in transportation and communications, companies have grown substantially by improving the packaging of products and have been born the first successful brands. In the XX century, consumers began to associate brands with quality and consistency at the time and are still two essential characteristics for consumers to have a good brand image (Low & Fullerton, 1994). At the beginning of the XXI century, brand management was already seen as vital to the future success of the entire organization and is performed in most companies (Jo et al., 2001).

In this way, in the academic literature there is a plurality of definitions that characterize a brand. Thus, several authors such as Barich and Kotler (1991) and Aaker (1996) define a brand as a distinctive element, that is, something that distinguishes one product from another

from the competition when they satisfy exactly the same needs. Keller and Lehmann (2006) goes on to say that these differences can be rational and tangible - related to the brand's product performance - or more symbolic, emotional and intangible - related to what the brand stands for.

A brand can also be associated with various definitions and functions, such as - legal instrument; logo; company; shorthand; risk reducer; identity system; image in the minds of consumers; value system; personality; relationship; value added; and developing entity (de Chernatony & Riley, 1998). However, most authors use keywords as "personality" and / or "relationship" in the definition of the brand itself, which emphasizes that these elements are extremely important for the characterization of a brand.

As previously mentioned, competitors can imitate the functional (tangible) elements of a product or service, but the intangible elements are already harder or even impossible to reproduce, mainly due to the subjectivity of these elements. So, the best way to create a singularity in the brand is through a definition of its own personality, that is, humanize the brand, using communication resources or even packaging design (de Chernatony & Riley, 1998). Some authors define brand personality as a set of human characteristics associated with a brand (Patterson & O'Malley, 2006).

Therefore, the company through its communication tools creates brand personality. On the other hand, brand image is the way the brand personality is perceived by consumers (de Chernatony & Riley, 1998; Mabkhot et al., 2017). Thus the brand image is described as the perceptions and beliefs of the consumers, reflecting on the associations retained in their memory about the brand. In this way, companies have to achieve that through the personality of the brand create a robust brand image and attractive to most consumers. One way to achieve this is to design a brand personality that the majority of the target audience is associated with, that represents their personality.

Therefore, because brands are associated with human elements, individuals create relationships with brands and then feelings (positive or negative), based on the elements of brand communication and information sources not controlled by companies - word-of-mouth, direct personal experiences and/or sites (Thomson et al., 2005).

The model "Attachment-Aversion" identifies the two main components that are both related to brand attachment, brand aversion - brand prominence and brand distance. The prominence of the brand is when the cognitive and affective memories of a brand are very

accessible in the mind of the consumer. The distance that a consumer has of a brand is all the greater the less he identifies with the brand. In this way, attachment and aversion are opposed to the mirror in the perceived distance of a brand, but the two must be high in prominence of the brand; in contrast, indifference relationships are characterized in low brand prominence (Park et al., 2013). Thus, consumers who create relationships with some brands (brand prominence), these can be beneficial or harmful to the companies (perceived distance of the brand), depending on how the individual identifies with the brand image and consequently with the personality of the brand. This model is very useful to reflect on how it is that such opposing feelings about a brand arise.

## **1.2. Negative feelings about brands**

In the last decade, there have been some studies on negative feelings in relation to brands. Some specialists have explored these studies and these have diverged by three different paths - negative consumer relations to the brand (Fournier & Alvarez, 2013; Park et al., 2013); anti-brand communities (Hollenbeck & Zinkhan, 2006; Krishnamurthy & Kucuk, 2009) and the negative double jeopardy phenomenon (Kucuk, 2008b, 2010). These feelings have negative consequences for the brand and, of course, for the company, mainly because consumers are either avoiding consuming branded products or sending a negative message about the organization.

Negative consumer emotions about brands arise from stimuli that may be associated with products or services (tangible elements) or branding elements (intangible elements) through information sources controlled or not controlled by companies (Romani et al., 2012). Research on consumer negative emotions towards the brand has concentrated mostly on the tangible elements of the products or services. However, in the last few years the intangible elements of the brands, as previously mentioned, are extremely relevant for companies to achieve competitive advantages sustained in the long term compared to competitors. Thus, there are some studies that enumerate the main causes of consumer negative emotions in relation to brands due to their intangible elements - unwanted brand personality (Hogg & Banister, 2001) and negative acts practiced or believed to have been practiced by the parent company (Kozinets & Handelman, 2004).

Some authors argue that individuals consume certain brands to satisfy self-needs, such as confirmation to others or personality enhancement. When brand associations are used to

construct the self or to communicate a self-concept to others, a connection is formed with the brand (Escalas & Bettman, 2003). In other words, individuals like to consume products with which they identify, that the brand shows the image they want to convey to others. Evidently, they will consume from brand that shows a personality that they identify with (Hogg & Banister, 2001). For example, most people buy and then wear clothes with which they identify, which transmit their personality, is an act of self-communication. On the other hand, the personality that the brand shows can also inhibit individuals from consuming it. That is, if the personality of the brand is antagonistic to what the consumer wants to project to others he will refrain from buying the products of that brand. This feeling is taken to the extreme when an individual who does not identify with the brand influences the people around him not to buy products that come from that brand.

As stated above, trademarks are impaired through acts that have been or are being incriminated by their parent companies. Thus, it is often accusations of company abuses towards its workers, monopolistic threats to competition, morally deplorable acts and/or ambitious attitudes practiced by the company (Hollenbeck & Zinkhan, 2006; Kozinets & Handelman, 2004, 2004; Smith et al., 2010). In this way, the negative images that consumers have because of all these transgressions are often the result of news broadcasted by the media and the phenomenon of electronic word-of-mouth, which causes negative feelings about brands (Zarantonello et al., 2016). The greater the offenses that companies are accused of, and the more humiliating and harmful the perceived acts are, the stronger the negative feelings toward the brand and the more likely it is to cause feelings of hatred.

Consumer negative feelings about a brand can also arise through a very peculiar phenomenon. According to some authors, an individualized marketing can promote consumers aversive relationships with the brand, when these advances are not reciprocal, they are persistent and extreme (Godfrey et al., 2011). For example, when a company has data that has or has not been made available by the individual and the individual receives multiple calls in an insistent way to promote a product, this attitude can cause enough negative feelings of the subject in relation to the brand.

In the same perspective of brands insistence with consumers, studies have emerged that display that the excessive and/or inappropriate publicity with the aim of consumers loving brands can easily create the opposite effect. In particular, disruptive advertising (for example, pop-up ads) distracts subjects when they are performing important or leisure activities, or may even stop these activities altogether and are considered quite annoying by them.



Consequently, this type of advertising is increasingly practiced by brands, mainly because of the ease of implementation and its low cost. By contrast, some authors argue that disruptive advertising creates a feeling of annoyance in consumers in such a way that diminishes preferences for such brands, even negative brand feelings may arise (Bell & Buchner, 2018).

Other psychological theories suggest that emotions that are experienced during the buying and/or consuming process are highly determinant in an individual's subsequent actions (Romani & Dalli, 2012). In other words, if an individual experiences negative emotions towards a brand in the act of obtaining and/or consuming, it will most likely painfully affect their relationship with the brand in the future; this phenomenon can be reflected in several ways.

As we saw earlier through the Attachment–aversion (AA) model, the more prominent a brand is in the consumer's mind, the stronger the brand's feelings. In this perspective, Kucuk (2008b) points out in an academic study that Double Jeopardy is a Marketing theory that refers to how much stronger brands are the more their advantages multiply compared to weak brands. On the other hand, strong brands also have multiple disadvantages compared to weak brands, such as various anti-brand and anti-consumer movements (Negative Double Jeopardy). Through this study, we realized that the brands that have more consumers with negative feelings about them are the brands that are more prominent in the mind of the consumer, that is, that are more known to the common individuals.

### **1.3. Hatred for brands**

Hate is a very complex emotion, as psychology writers rarely identify hatred as a primary emotion. Most studies characterize hatred as a composite of primary and, in some cases, secondary emotions (Zarantonello et al., 2016). Thus, J. Sternberg (2003) identifies three components of hate-disgust and disgust; anger and fear; and devaluation by contempt. According to Sternberg these three components generate different types of hatred, based on their different combinations. On the other hand, other empirical studies define hatred as a simple and specific emotion (Zarantonello et al., 2016).

In this way, psychologists agree that moral violations represent the most common motive that triggers the feeling of hatred in individuals, although they recognize the existence of other possible causes, such as the perception of personality mismatch between a person and the target of hatred. In this way, individuals deal with hatred in different ways, can distance

themselves from the object they hate (strategies to avoid), can attack the target of hatred (attack strategies) or confront the object they hate (Zarantonello et al., 2016).

The concept of brand hatred has been largely neglected as an object of research. However, recently the relevance of this topic has been pointed out by several empirical studies in the marketing area (Zarantonello et al., 2016). Thus, the literature on anti-brand communities has shown that consumers gather in hate groups in order to express their negative feelings about brands (Hollenbeck & Zinkhan, 2006, 2010; Krishnamurthy & Kucuk, 2009; Kucuk, 2008b, 2010).

According to some studies, hatred arises as a desire for revenge and / or a desire to avoid what they hate (Grégoire et al., 2009). Thus, consumers need to punish companies for the damages they have caused. However, individuals also have a need to cut off relationships with companies, they do not want to relate more to the brands they hate and cease to use their products. These two desires may arise due to a service failure and may even coexist side by side.

Being that the hatred for the brands is the maximum exponent of negative feeling by the brands. As a result, consumers express their feelings about brands publicly, mainly through publications on social networks (Romani & Dalli, 2012; Zarantonello et al., 2016). In this way, the hatred that the consumers have for the brands triggers behaviors that show this rejection by the brands, being the typical behaviors are the negative WOM (Word-of-Mouth), boycotts and intentional sabotage of the actions of the companies Zarantonello et al., 2016).

## **Chapter 2- Impact of new technologies on the brand-consumer relationship**

### **2.1. Impact of the Internet on the brand-consumer relationship**

Market power over the years has changed significantly. First, when the first companies emerged during the period of the industrial revolution, producers dominated markets because of their ability to suppress the needs of individuals. Later, this power was progressively passed on to retailers because of the availability of several products in the same space. Currently, the internet has changed the way society behaves, thus, market power is progressively passing to consumers. The goal behind the creation of the internet is that all

those who use it have access to the same information. In this way, we can assume that this objective is being partially fulfilled, being evident in the asymmetry of knowledge existing between the companies and the consumers. (Krishnamurthy & Kucuk, 2007).

This phenomenon has altered all processes that affect business relationships between companies and individuals - consumer profile, purchasing process, products, marketing strategy and many others. In this way, online consumers are called as *Homo Digitus*, that is, they dominate the technology, they are informed, they are connected, they have a solution-based lifestyle, they usually get everything they want and they cannot imagine their process of consumption without the internet (Hoffman et al., 2004).

Information technologies, especially the Internet, dissipate physical and temporal barriers at an ever-increasing pace. We can now be, virtually, anywhere and at any time (Krishnamurthy & Kucuk, 2007). For example, a consumer over the internet can buy a sweater from a brand that is not established in their country at any time of the day, which means that organizations are increasingly efficient and transparent in their activities.

The introduction of Internet in society has impacted the consumer profile, mainly in three dimensions (Krishnamurthy & Kucuk, 2007):

- **Economic-** Consumers no longer need to accept the value dictated by companies, they can actively research the lowest prices, through the transparency of the internet, in this way, actively building new economic values;
- **Social-** Society has been impacted by the internet, especially by social networks; consumers can unite with each other through communities thus doing against corporate power. Individuals on the internet are heard more easily;
- **Legal-** The internet facilitates access to knowledge; almost all subjects (or even all) can be searched. Thus, consumers have more knowledge about the legal transgressions practiced by the companies and the only ones by which they are governed.

These three dimensions together bring much impact to the brand-consumer relationship. For example, through a community in social networks the individual is aware of the pricing rules that a company may have infringed, verifies that this is true and how it can act, and subsequently puts pressure on the Internet for the company to act correctly.

Another interesting phenomenon about the disruption of the consumer's profile is that individuals now rely more on their peers than on the companies themselves to obtain

information about products and/or services (Gavilan et al., 2018). The interactions that exist in technological platforms facilitate the decision-making process of the purchase of a good or service are the main sources of social influence in this process (Amblee & Bui, 2011). In this way, the academic literature indicates that consumers have the capacity to influence each other (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004), being the Internet the environment in which this phenomenon is more explicit, since this influence is omnipresent and exercised through recommendations, evaluations and verbal evaluations (Amblee & Bui, 2011). An unknown person can have a lot of influence on the consumer process, much more than the suppliers themselves, so this phenomenon could show a sense of consumer mistrust and negativity towards the brands that are increasingly present in our society.

On the other hand, the perception that the companies have of the consumer is also changing due to the new technologies of communication, mainly the Internet. Thus, the identification of a good consumer is different from the past. In this way, it is essential that companies take into account negative communication about them on the Internet and that they manage it in a way that leaves consumers satisfied and prevents this communication from spreading (Kucuk, 2014). Seen from this perspective, currently a good consumer is willing to share directly, positive or negative comments with the company (Kucuk, 2008a; Lusch & Webster, 2011). Combining consumer complaints comes to companies as a result of shifting from private experience to a public phenomenon as the number of digitally interconnected consumers increases (Ward & Ostrom, 2006). However, both traditional marketing philosophies and traditional corporate management underestimate the value of information that can be drawn from negative consumer comments.

## **2.2. Impact of Social Networks on the brand-consumer relationship**




A social network is defined as a set of nodes connected by a specific type of relation, in this way, the relational connections can be between groups of people, companies or specific events, etc. (Yu & Chiu, 2013). In other words, social networks allow users to create personal profiles, articulate with other identities, connect to other users and brands, and view, share, upload and comment on photos, messages, videos and other content published in their feed. news (Phua & Jin, 2011).

In this way, the main advantage of social networks is that they provide users with the possibility of interacting with other users, companies, etc. For example, when a social

network user "likes" or "follows" a brand, they receive updates and branded posts in their newsfeed. Thus, users can interact with the brand, with other users, with their friends and even with other brands (Qualman, 2010). In social networks, almost all or even all, contents can be visualized, liked, shared and commented by the friends or even strangers. Thus, people and brands can be heard faster and by more individuals than in more traditional media (e.g. radio, television).

However, each social network has its own specificity. Typically, individuals use Facebook to connect with friends, Twitter to follow news and trending topics, and Instagram to filter and upload visual images (Figure 1) (Phua et al., 2017).

**Figure 1:** Different features of social networks

Social Networking Sites Platform	Main Features/ Functions
	Post long-form content (e.g. video, news article, pictures); browse newsfeed of friends' updates; "like", comment and share content
	Post short messages (140 characters or less) containing links to articles, photos and videos; microblogging; use of # (hashtags) searchable by topics
	Post filtered photographs and short videos, add captions, use of # (hashtags) searchable by topics; like and comment on photos and short videos <u>posted</u>

**Source:** adapted from Phua et al. (2017)

Thus, these social networks have in common allow consumers to interact in groups (closed or open) on a specific subject (Phua et al., 2017). Thus, they enable consumers to participate in communities around a brand and discuss issues about that particular brand.

However, it is necessary to highlight the importance of the social network Facebook in today's society. In recent years, Facebook has had undeniable popularity - being the most used social network in the world, connecting more than 1.37 billion daily users, on average, in September 2017 (Facebook, 2017). As Facebook is where the largest number of people are concentrated, companies to create long-term sustainable competitive advantages also need to be integrated into this social network by creating their individual pages. In this way, this social network already has a great importance in the commercial relations, where the

individuals describe their experiences of consumption, comment their opinions about the brands and one can even buy products having as intermediary Facebook (Phua et al., 2017).

In this way, it has never been easier for consumers to get the opinion of other individuals about a particular product and/or service, than to have access to the Internet, in particular to some social network. This phenomenon is called electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) - manifests itself in the online context and can be described as an opinion of potential customers, actual or former on a product or company and it usually produces an effect of influence on other individuals (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). This phenomenon manifests itself massively on social networks, particularly on Facebook, because these are more popular than ever. As a result, there is easier access to feedback from other consumers, offering the possibility of more personalized interaction between brands and (potential) consumers (Bitter & Grabner-Krauter, 2016). Therefore, there is a need for companies to measure the consequences that eWOM (positive and negative) have on their brand image and subsequently on their revenue. However, there is a shortage of related academic mainly on how social interactions in social networks affect the decision making of individuals. Additionally, most of the existing research focuses on positive eWOM (Takac et al., 2011).

Thus, in recent years consumers have assumed a new role in the consumer-company process as co-creators of value for brands (Bitter & Grabner-Krauter, 2016). That is, consumers through social networks are constantly creating new content about brands, and are even more influential than the brands themselves. Thus, consumers are no longer seen as passive recipients of the marketing dynamics of companies and become proactive participants in the process of brand creation and management (Hollebeek, 2013). For example, in social networks, especially on Facebook, there are companies that advertise their products through publications and some consumers explain to others how the same product works.

In this sense, these two phenomena (eWOM and consumers as co-creators of value for brands) derive from consumers with the internet, in particular with social networks, having started to establish relationships with brands. In this way, interest in engagement concept has increased significantly in the last decade, although this concept associated to commercial relations is not new. This fact is more expressive if we analyze academic literature of marketing of services, many academic articles have used the term client/consumer engagement before 2005, since then there has been a very expressive increase. However, few of these authors have endeavored to define the term (Bouvier et al., 2014; Brodie et al., 2011; Gavilanes et al., 2018). But, Brodie et al. (2011) Some authors affirm that engagement is

defined as the consumers performing a series of behaviors related to the company, this being a multidimensional concept (Brodie et al., 2011).

Within the dynamic business environment, companies must create engagement with customers in order to create a long-term competitive advantage over their competitors. The rationale behind this assertion is that customers who engage with brands play a role as co-creators of brand content (Brodie et al., 2011). With the proliferation of social networks linked to commercial relations, this phenomenon has increased exponentially. Due to the social networking environment, it is conducive to creating and narrowing client-company relations and sharing opinions, as mentioned in the case of Facebook. Empirical studies have shown that, to a certain extent, increased consumer engagement with brands is more significant for hedonic brands than for functional brands (Hollebeek, 2013).

Consumer engagement with brands on social networks can be positive, for example, a consumer sharing a branded post with a positive message or negative, for example, commenting on brand-name Facebook is detrimental to the company (Bitter & Grabner-Kraeuter, 2016). It is of extreme relevance for academics to focus on these two types of engagement. However, academic studies have pointed out that negative eWOM has stronger effects on purchasing decisions than positive ones. It is suggested that unfavorable information is somehow more shocking or surprising and therefore has more influence on the formation of evaluations (Chang & Wu, 2014). In this way, academics need to pay close attention to negative engagement and focus on this, but this has not happened frequently so far.

### **Chapter 3- Anti-Brand Communities on the Internet**

A community is composed of individuals and relationships among its members. In order to exist a community it is necessary to have something that unites its members, that is to say, a common interest, be it a location, an occupation, a leisure activity or a brand. Thus, when we observe the dynamics of the communities, it is evident that these are fundamental for human well-being, because its members share essential resources that may be of a cognitive, emotional or material nature. In this way, various things can be shared in the communities - such as food and drink, useful information and moral support - but there is one thing that

seems to be shared in all of them: the creation and negotiation of meanings (McAlexander et al., 2002).

In this way, a brand community is defined as a network of relationships between individuals that are arranged around a specific brand. In these communities, there is a sense of purpose among consumers towards a brand, creating a deep sense of mission (McAlexander et al., 2002; Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001).

As previously mentioned, the internet has changed the relationship between business and consumers. Previously, community members met physically. However, with the current Internet resources, these movements are establishing themselves in the virtual space. In this way, the Internet is playing an important role in the development of community brands that have become more powerful than the previous movements, since these were restricted by a geographical area and/or time zones (Hollenbeck & Zinkhan, 2006). It is important to note that the Internet facilitates this process due to the increase in the number of online social networks (Kucuk, 2008a). Thus, in the anti-brand communities on the Internet, members establish connections and create a collective identity through the interest of a specific brand.

As we have seen before, brands can either be associated with something beneficial (positive feelings about brands), or they can symbolize negative perceptions associated with companies (negative feelings about brands). Thus, communities around brands can have two variances-communities in favor of brands and communities that oppose brands (anti-brand communities) (Hollenbeck & Zinkhan, 2010).

Thus, a branded community is defined as "a specialized, non-geographically linked community based on a structured set of social relationships among brand admirers" (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001). In this way, consumers are motivated to unite among themselves in these communities in order to meet their social and identification needs (Phua et al., 2017).

Just as communities for a brand are built around a common passion for a brand (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001), in anti-brand communities, members have negative feelings that can be hateful, on a particular brand. In this way, anti-brand communities usually oppose a predominant brand or company and are non-geographically linked communities, based on an organized set of social relations (Awasthi et al., 2012; Hollenbeck & Zinkhan, 2006, 2010; Kucuk, 2008a, 2008b). Both community members for a brand and anti-brand communities have passionate and committed relationships over a particular brand, so they are willing to invest time and effort because of a particular brand; however, the focus of members of an



anti-brand community is the pursuit of social justice, being activists of global anti-brand movements (Hollenbeck & Zinkhan, 2010).

Thus, in a time marked by rapid globalization, companies use sophisticated marketing techniques to be able to assign global meanings to their brands. However, some consumers insist on resisting the meanings and / or values imposed by brands. When several consumers with this ideology regarding a particular brand come together, anti-brand communities emerge (Hollenbeck & Zinkhan, 2006).

Anti-brand sites are a way of expressing and organizing anti-brand communities. By definition, anti-brand sites are online spaces that focus their negative attention on a specific brand, facilitating the collective action of consumers and activists against a brand (Bailey, 2004; Krishnamurthy & Kucuk, 2009). These sites serve as a forum for consumers to express their discontent, facilitate the exchange of anti-brand information, organize boycotts, and coordinate lawsuits (Krishnamurthy & Kucuk, 2009).

Anti-brand sites to attack brands more effectively use a very powerful tool-the names of brands associated with negative connections, because it is easier to remember the name of the anti-brand site (for example, Killercoke.org of Coca-Cola). With these names, anti-brand sites have also benefited from the popularity of brand name and web traffic, for example, a consumer may be looking for content about a brand and finding content from anti-brand sites (Kucuk, 2008b).

Strong brands have multiple disadvantages over weak brands, such as various anti-brand moves, which are reflecting on the Internet, especially on anti-brand sites (Kucuk, 2008b, 2010). Since the law protects anti-brand sites organized by the consumer, as long as they do not generate profits, thereby limiting the effect of corporate legal action and increasing the legal power of these sites and thus the consumer's voice (Kucuk, 2008a).

Many of the anti-brand sites have come about because consumers are no longer passive receivers of company information and advertising messages, but actively co-create market value. The Internet can be both the most promising and revolutionary direct marketing tool for businesses as well as empowering groups of consumer activists, enabling them to deliver messages against brands at a low cost and for a large number of people at anti-brand sites (Awasthi et al., 2012). In this way, the growing number of anti-brand sites organized by consumers is a good example of today's empowered consumers raising their voices as they exit the market (Krishnamurthy & Kucuk, 2009; Kucuk, 2008a).

For the presence of anti-brand communities on the Internet, it is assumed that there are two causal antecedents - consumer power (economic, social and legal) and then dissatisfaction with a particular brand being the trigger to process this phenomenon. Thus, we can disaggregate the dissatisfaction in three types - the transactional dissatisfaction, which represents the dislike of the service provided by the retailer; the dissatisfaction with the market, which exposes the dissatisfaction with the commercial practices; and ideological dissatisfaction, which reveals dislike of the economic system. Taken together, both factors, consumer power and dissatisfaction, lead to the presence of anti-brand communities on the internet (Krishnamurthy & Kucuk, 2009). In general, anti-brand sites address cultural, technological, political and legal issues (Awasthi et al., 2012).

Some empirical studies have stated that the more a consumer is more empathic, that is, empathy is related to negatives in negative actions on the consumer. The greater the empathy of an individual, once again will be the transgression of the company, the more motivated will be to act on moral infractions and the greater probability of participation of anti-brand communities (Romani et al., 2015). In this way, a way to motivate the development of the motivational force to react to the ethical circumstances.

The anti-brand movement is an example of a broader anti-consumer social movement where consumers resist capitalism, globalization, marketing efforts, and strategies of a corporate brand. In this way, many members of anti-brand communities criticize the economic system implemented in most countries of today's society, capitalism (Hollenbeck & Zinkhan, 2010). As opposed to this thinking, other members simply integrate these communities due to functional issues of products and/or services (Kucuk, 2008b).

Thus, often in anti-brand communities, companies and their brands are accused of failing to enforce workers' rights, making monopolistic threats to competition, and being morally bankrupt and/or exceptionally greedy actors (Romani et al., 2015).

In this way, anti-brand communities usually arise due to four reasons (Awasthi et al., 2012):

1. Provide a social community where members share common moral obligations;
2. Provide a support network to achieve common goals;
3. Provide a way to deal with workplace difficulties, fighting for labor rights;
4. Provide a resource center for action, through demonstrations or boycotts.

Thus, the main goals of anti-brand communities' actions are to publicize market inequalities, inform members about the rewards (moral) associated with a restrictive lifestyle, and build a new collective identity (Awasthi et al., 2012).

In anti-brand communities, members are struggling for the same cause and have the same feeling about the brand in question. Thus, in anti-brand communities there is a sense of deep community, thus creating an environment where individuals can be honest with one another. Through this trusting environment, consumers report personal stories of their interactions with the brand, knowing that their audience will be empathetic (Hollenbeck & Zinkhan, 2006). This way, in these communities there is an enormous amount of information about the brand, generating resources against it.

Finally, anti-brand communities can contaminate the brand image, due to the violations reported in those communities. If anti-brand activists and their audience reach a significant level, the company's sales and brand value can potentially be affected. Thus, companies need to get a clear picture of their brand in the online environment and transform consumers' negative experiences and language into positive attitudes and experiences for individuals (Kucuk, 2010). In other words, improper conduct of a brand may lead to customer dissatisfaction affecting its relationship with the brand. This event may lead to the formation of an anti-brand community or the entry of more members into an already formed anti-brand community. But, with an adequate and clear communication of this brand, by being attentive to these communities, can reverse this situation (Awasthi et al., 2012).

# Methodology

As mentioned earlier, the theme of the dissertation is the anti-brand communities on the internet. The main objective will be to understand how, for the same companies, some consumers invest so much time and effort by participating in anti-brand communities and other consumers who apparently like these brands. In other words, we will study the differences in consumer profiles that participate in anti-brand communities and other consumers who apparently like these brands. To achieve the main objective, due to weak academic research on the subject, it is necessary to divide our research into three sequential and interdependent studies:

**First study:** Find out which brands attract more anti-brand communities



**Second study:** Understand where anti-brand communities are currently concentrated on the internet



**Third and main study:** Find out the reasons why consumers spend effort to integrate anti-brand communities

## **First study: Find out which brands attract more anti-brand communities**

According to Kucuk (2008b), in the empirical study "Negative Double Jeopardy: The role of anti-brand sites on the internet" strong brands have multiple disadvantages compared to weak brands such as various anti-brand and anti-consumer movements. Kucuk to identify the strong brands in the market used two indicators - Brand Rank and Brand Consistency. Therefore, the ranking of companies in the BW List was used to identify the Brand Rank and the longer a specific brand remained on the list in the last five years identifies the Brand Consistency. However, as this study is from 2008 and the business market is extremely dynamic there is evidence to believe that the brands that Kucuk identified at the time as strong nowadays may no longer be.

Thus, to reach this goal the Kucuk methodology was employed. Thus, to measure Brand Rank we use the "Interbrand Best Global Brands 2017" list. On the other hand, to measure the Brand Consistency was used the same list but of the previous five years- "Interbrand Best Global Brands 2016", "Interbrand Best Global Brands 2015", "Interbrand Best Global Brands 2014", "Interbrand Best Global Brands 2013", "Interbrand Best Global Brands 2012". In order to find the strongest brands, and as Kucuk does not describe in his empirical study as he did, we performed a weighted average between Brand Consistency and Brand Rank, these two indicators having exactly the same weighting. Therefore, these were the ten strongest brands we found in today's market:

<b>1°</b>	<b>Apple</b>
<b>2°</b>	Google
<b>3°</b>	Coca-Cola
<b>4°</b>	Microsoft
<b>5°</b>	Samsung
<b>6°</b>	IBM
<b>7°</b>	Toyota
<b>8°</b>	GE
<b>9°</b>	Amazon
<b>10°</b>	Mercedes

**Table 1:** The 10 strongest brands on the market

## **Second study: Understand where anti-brand communities are currently concentrated on the internet**

Kucuk (2008b), in the empirical study "Negative Double Jeopardy: The Role of Anti-brand Sites on the Internet," said anti-brand communities were concentrated on anti-brand sites that were very common at the time. However, the digital environment is very dynamic and since 2008, social networks, especially Facebook, have grown exponentially in the number of users, as already mentioned.

Thus, there is also evidence to believe that anti-brand communities have begun to focus on social networks. Thus, we deduce that these should be concentrated in the most popular social networks in the world, that allow the creation of pages or groups with people that do not know but have a common interest. Through this theory, the social networks that are likely to add more anti-brand communities are Facebook, Instagram and Twitter (Joe Phua

et al., 2017). However, it is necessary to include the possibility that we may be wrong and the anti-brand communities are mostly integrated into other social networks or blogs.

Through the method that Kucuk (2008b) used in his empirical study, we searched the Google search engine for each of the world's strongest brands using a set of negative terms (Anti, Sucks, Hate, Fuck, Murder and False Boycott). The search will be performed for the first time using the brand name and a negative term, and then the same search will be performed using the tag and the negative term in quotes (eg Starbucks suck and "Starbucks suck") (Kucuk, 2008b). In order to evaluate whether anti-brand communities are concentrated in social networks, we use the same methodology for each social network (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter), adapting it to the referential social network, using the search bar to search the name associated with the negative term. On the other hand, at the time we were doing Google search and found anti-brand communities that were not included in any of the first four scenarios, we used that data and included it in the "other" category. The following table shows the number of anti-brand communities on websites, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and other social and/or other networks.

**Table 2:** Anti-brand communities on the internet

	Google	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter	Others	Total
<b>Apple</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>99</b>
Google	3	29	0	13	1	46
Coca-Cola	2	30	0	3	1	36
Microsoft	3	26	1	10	2	42
Samsung	1	34	2	14	0	51
<b>IBM</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>
Toyota	3	22	5	2	1	33
<b>GE</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>
Amazon	0	54	2	10	0	66
Mercedes	1	9	0	1	0	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>393</b>

In this way, we verified that the anti-brand communities are no longer allocated, mainly in the websites, but in Facebook (we consider those that were present in the pages and in the public and private groups). Then Twitter also has a relatively high number of anti-brand communities.

## **Third and main study: Find out what are the main motivations that drive consumers to integrate anti-brand communities**

### **Context and objectives of research**

Individuals who integrate anti-brand communities on the Internet feel so unhappy with a company that they spend the time and effort to critique a brand on the internet. We currently live in a knowledge sharing society; with the use of the internet, almost all individuals have access to the same information. Therefore, there is an urgent need to answer an important question: Why do some individuals integrate anti-brand communities on the Internet and others do not?

Thus, in order to be able to answer this great question we construct several hypotheses of investigation:

**Hypothesis 1: Consumer profile (a) gender, (b) age, (c) country, (d) education, and (e) empathy) influence the intensity of consumer negative feelings about brands.**

Demographic variables such as age, gender and education influence the profile of the consumer. However, the culture of the different countries has been characterized as the key factor that defines the behavioral differences of the consumer, despite the globalization phenomenon currently lived (Hofstede & McCrae, 2004). How these factors influence consumer behavior may also have an influence on the feelings and relationships individuals have over brands. According to some authors, empathy influences consumers' feelings about brands (Zarantonello et al., 2016). Thus, these variables make up the consumer profile and can influence their feelings about brands.

**Hypothesis 2: Consumer profile (a) gender, b) age, c) country, d) education and e) empathy) influence these to integrate anti-brand communities on the internet.**

In the previous hypothesis, it is assumed that the profile of consumers in relation to brands influences their feelings towards brands. In this way, we can also infer that the profile of consumers can influence the participation of individuals in anti-brand communities.

**Hypothesis 3: The more empathic a consumer is, the greater their sense of brand hatred.**

The more a consumer is empathic the more likely they will have to participate in anti-brand moves. Empathy is related to negative beliefs about the individual's unethical actions

(Romani et al., 2015). Hate has as its causal element the behavioral irregularities of the company (Zarantonello et al., 2016). Thus, we will test whether the level of empathy is related to the level of hatred a consumer has for a brand, and we will divide between consumers who participate in anti-brand communities and those who are not integrated in those communities but who hold negative feelings for brands.

**Hypothesis 4: Consumers who consider joining an anti-brand community are those who hate brands the most.**

Hate brings a very strong desire for revenge and a need to avoid who triggered this feeling. In this way, clients need to punish companies for the attitudes they had to generate a sense of hatred in them (Grégoire et al., 2009). Since hatred is seen as the extreme form of disliking a brand (Zarantonello et al., 2016; Romani & Dalli, 2012). Thus, consumers who hate brands the most are integrated into anti-brand communities (Kucuk, 2008b, 2010; Zarantonello et al., 2016).

**Hypothesis 5: Consumers who hate brands the most are those who have an active participation in anti-brand communities.**

The consumer hatred for brands is the result of a deliberate and deliberate intention to avoid brands, accompanied by behaviors that show this rejection by brands, with typical behaviors being the negative WOM, boycotting and intentionally sabotaging corporate actions (Hu et al., 2018; Zarantonello et al., 2016). Thus, we will test whether the greater the consumer hatred for a brand, the more they will have an active participation in the anti-brand communities.

## **Type of investigation**

In order to reach the third and main objective we use a quantitative research methodology. Thus, we used the online questionnaire survey method to identify the motivations and profiles of consumers participating in anti-brand communities (Malhotra & Birks, 2006).

From the respondent's point of view, this approach is the most convenient method, since this procedure allows the flexibility of response in spatial and temporal terms. The issue we are addressing is delicate, not consensual, and members of anti-brand communities often work in branded companies. So the online questionnaire allows respondents to preserve their anonymity (Regmi et al., 2016).



The use of this method allows the obtaining of high amounts of information quickly and with reduced costs (Saunders et al., 2009). On the other hand, online questionnaires are usually criticized because researchers are unable to question the respondents (Malhotra & Birks, 2006), but the advantages presented compensate for this inconvenience.

## **Sample**

The main objective of this empirical study is to understand the reasons that lead consumers to integrate anti-brand communities, so it is logical to think that the questionnaire should be exclusively addressed to consumers who are in this situation. However, it will also be interesting to see how the profile of these consumers differs from other individuals who do not participate in anti-brand communities- consumers who have negative feelings for a brand but do not participate in an anti-brand community and consumers who do not have negative feelings for no markings.

Thus, this questionnaire is addressed to the general population; it is considered that the most indicated sampling is the theoretical one for convenience. Although this type of sampling may bring about some uncertainty of representativeness, it is often applied in investigations carried out in a short time, since it allows individuals with availability and voluntarily to contribute (Marôco, 2014).

After obtaining the responses of the general population, the individuals were divided into three distinct profiles:

**Profile A)** Individuals participating in anti-brand communities

**Profile B)** Individuals with negative feelings about brands but do not participate in an anti-brand community

**Profile C)** Individuals without negative feelings towards brands thus do not participate in an anti-brand community

In order to obtain the responses of individuals with Profile A, we have published in all groups and pages 393 anti-brand communities of the 10 strongest brands on the market, which we have discovered in the second objective of this research. As these communities are quite closed to all those who do not have their ideology, the publications were made in a clear way, explaining the objective of the questionnaire in a simple and concrete manner (Mkono, 2017). Meanwhile, in order to obtain answers from the other profiles, the questionnaire was

disseminated in social networks, in the most varied types of groups, and by dynamic e-mail to all students at the University of Porto, in order to reach a heterogeneous sample.

## Construction of the Questionnaire

As previously mentioned, this questionnaire will distinguish between the three profiles (Profile A, Profile B and Profile C). Also with this questionnaire, we want to get the answer to the following questions:

1. Who integrates anti-brand communities?
2. What are the feelings experienced in an anti-brand community?
3. Why do they have negative feelings about a brand?

In this way, the questionnaire was constructed based on these objectives. Being that it is divided into 7 different sections (Annex 1):

- **First Section**

In this section, we want to obtain the profile of the individual, so respondents have to answer four questions about their profile (gender, age, country and level of education). However, they have an additional question:

Q5	Do you consider yourself an empathic person with the problems of others?	(Romani et al., 2015)
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To evaluate this question a Likert scale (from 1 to 6) was used, where (1) = "Nothing empathic" and (6) = "Totally empathetic".

- **Second Section**

At this stage of the questionnaire, the definition of an anti-brand community arises and questions consumers if they participate in a community of this type, if the individuals answer that yes we assume they have negative feelings for some brand.

- **Third Section**

All those respondents who answered in the previous question that they do not participate in a community are asked in this section if they have negative feelings about a brand.

Respondents who do not have negative feelings about a brand complete the questionnaire for them.

- **Fourth Section**

This section of the questionnaire is exclusively for individuals who have negative feelings about brands but do not participate in any anti-brand community. Respondents are asked to answer the questions in this section to think about the brand by which they nourish negative feelings.

Q1	What is this brand?
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In question 1 the respondent is given the chance to choose one or more of the ten brands that we identified in the first objectives as being the strongest in the market today, but may also mention other brands.

Q2	Does it compete (sell similar products) with any brand you love?	(Kucuk, 2008b)
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When we were pursuing the second goal, we noted that many of the anti-brand communities on the internet are derived from the fact that consumers loved the competing brand, so Question 2 is relevant to studying this phenomenon.

Q3	How much do you hate that brand?
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A Likert scale (from 1 to 6) was used to evaluate Q3, where (1) = "I do not hate" and (6) = "I totally hate".

Q4	Have you thought about joining an anti-brand community?
Q5	What platform would you choose to join an anti-brand community?

These two questions aim to understand whether consumers would be willing to join anti-brand communities.

- **Fifth Section**

In this section, only consumers who participate in an anti-brand community will respond, where the issues are similar to those in the previous section.

- **Sixth section**

This section, it is also targeted at individuals who participate in anti-brand communities and aims to understand the feelings experienced in these communities.

Q1	Do you have an active participation (comments, likes and/or shares) in the anti-brand community that you integrate?
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Question 1 aims to understand whether individuals who are integrated into the anti-brand communities have an active participation.

Q2	What do you feel an anti-brand community is?	
H1	A social community composed of members with common moral obligations	(Awasthi et al., 2012)
H2	A supportive network to achieve common goals	
H3	A way of coping with workplace difficulties	
H4	A resource hub for taking action	

Q2 aims to understand what consumers feel when they are part of an anti-brand community, and they can choose one or more assumptions and suggest others.

- **Seventh Section**

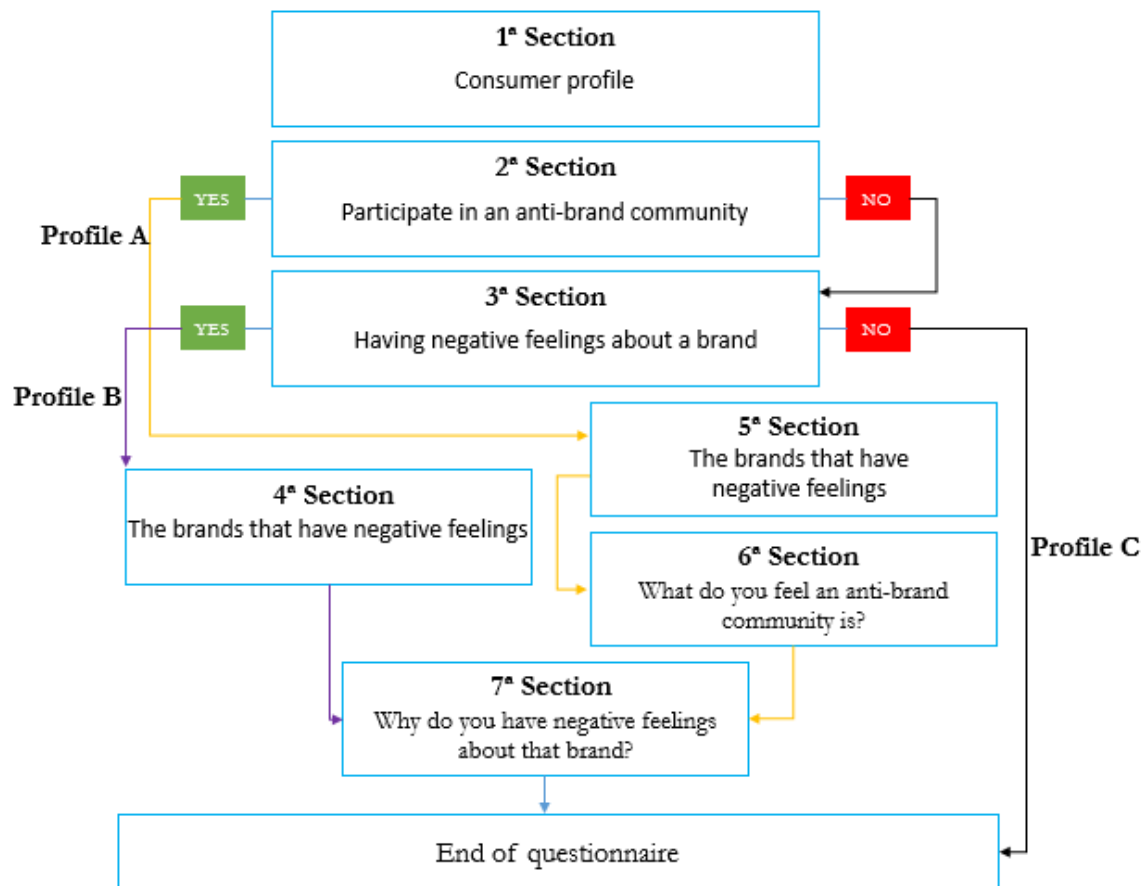
Finally, this section targets consumers with Profile A and B, e.g. consumers who participate in anti-brand communities and consumers who have negative feelings about brands but do not participate in anti-brand communities.

Q1 Why do you have negative feelings about that brand?		
H1	Low product/service quality	(Kucuk, 2008b)
H2	Inefficient purchasing process	
H3	Lack of brand identification	(Hogg & Banister, 2001)
H4	Insisting brand communication	(Godfrey et al., 2011)
H5	Labor rights abuses	(Hollenbeck & Zinkhan, 2006; Kozinets & Handelman, 2004; Romani et al., 2015; Smith et al., 2010)
H6	Monopolistic threats to competition	
H7	Morally bankrupt actors	
H8	Exceptionally greedy agents	
H9	Foster capitalismo	(Hollenbeck & Zinkhan, 2010)

## Summary of the questionnaire

Finally, this questionnaire intends to question several profiles of people, being very complex. In order to be simpler for readers to understand its dynamics we offer a summary table:

**Figure 2:** Summary of the questionnaire



The questionnaire was made available on the Google Docs platform from June until July 2018.

## Results analysis

At this stage of the empirical study, the results obtained through the online questionnaire will be analyzed. Thus, we will characterize the sample and then analyze the results obtained. The data were analyzed using the following software: Microsoft Excel 2010 and IBM SPSS Statistics 24.

## Characterization of the sample

In the questionnaire, 570 answers were obtained, where all are valid. The sample of this questionnaire is composed of the three profiles described above - profile A that are the consumers that participate in anti-brand communities, profile B that are the consumers that have negative feelings for some brand and do not integrate any anti-brand community and the profile C are consumers who do not have negative feelings about brands. Thus, to make it easier to describe the sample, we will divide the sample characterization by the various sections of the questionnaire.

### Section 1 (Profile A, Profile B and Profile C)

As can be seen from the analysis in Table 3, the majority of the sample is characterized by female (63.5%), less than 25 years old (62.8%), resident in Europe (88.9%), with a high educational level (71.4%) and considered very empathetic (44.6%).

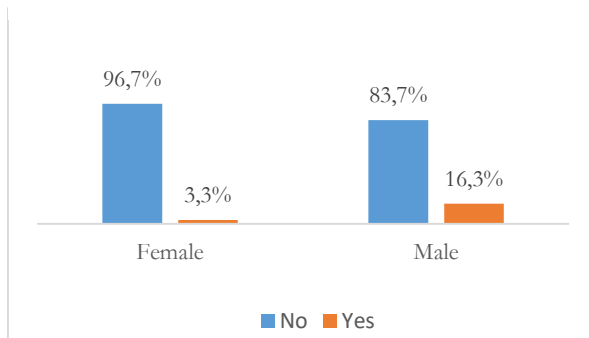
**Table 3:** Characterization of the consumer profile

		Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Gender	Female	362	63,5%	63,5%
	Male	208	36,5%	100,0%
Age Range	Less than 25 years	358	62,8%	62,8%
	26-35 years	131	23,0%	85,8%
	More than 36 years	81	14,2%	100,0%
Country	Europe	507	88,9%	88,9%
	North America	25	4,4%	93,3%
	South America	22	3,9%	97,2%
	Asia	16	2,8%	100,0%
Education	Medium	132	23,2%	23,2%
	High	407	71,4%	94,6%
	Very High	31	5,4%	100,0%
Empathy	Low	20	3,5%	3,5%
	Medium	206	36,1%	39,6%
	High	254	44,6%	84,2%
	Very High	90	15,8%	100,0%

## Section 2 (Profile A)

In this section we will characterize the individuals that integrate anti-brand communities through the profile.

**Graphic 1:** Gender of consumers participating in anti-brand communities and individuals not belonging to these communities

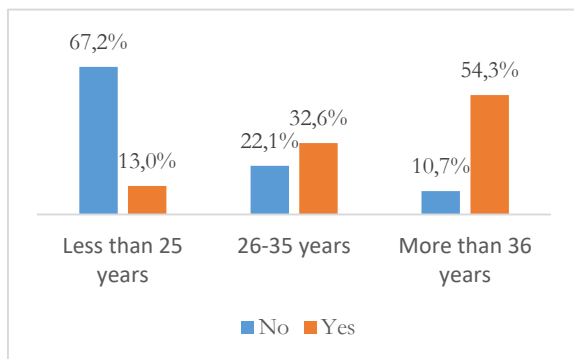


### a) Gender

Graph 1 shows that male consumers are the ones that are most integrated in the anti-brand communities. In other words, 16.3% of male respondents claim to integrate anti-brand communities, while only 3.3% of female subjects are anti-brand communities. Thus, we can conclude that individuals with Profile A

are mostly men.

**Graphic 2:** Age range of consumers participating in anti-brand communities and individuals not belonging to these communities



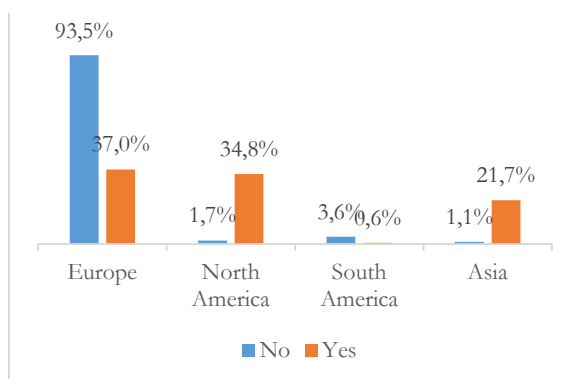
### b) Age Range

The older consumers in this sample are those who integrate more anti-brand communities (54.3%), on the other hand, these consumers have less weight in not being part of any anti-brand community (10.7%). Contrasting with the younger consumers in the sample, these are the ones that have a smaller weight in participation in

anti-brand communities (13%) and higher in non-integration in anti-brand communities (67.2%). Thus, we can conclude that the majority of consumers with Profile A are over 36 years old (Graph 2).



**Graphic 3:** Country of consumers participating in anti-brand communities and individuals not belonging to these communities

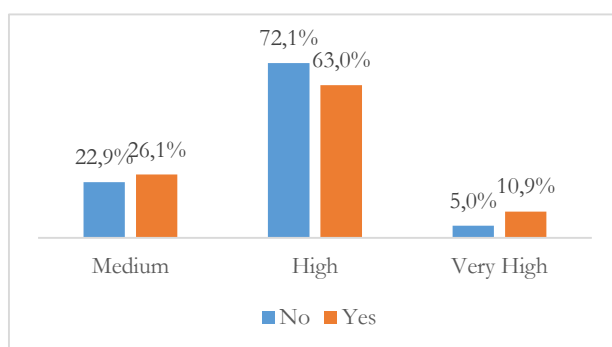


### c) Country

The majority of consumers participating in anti-brand communities come from European countries (34.8%) and North America (34.8%). However, respondents from North America are the ones that have the least weight in non-participation in anti-brand communities (1.7%). Thus, it can be stated that in the sample the majority of

consumers in North America have profile A, the same happens with the respondents coming from Asia (Chart 3).

**Graphic 4:** Age range of consumers participating in anti-brand communities and individuals not belonging to these communities

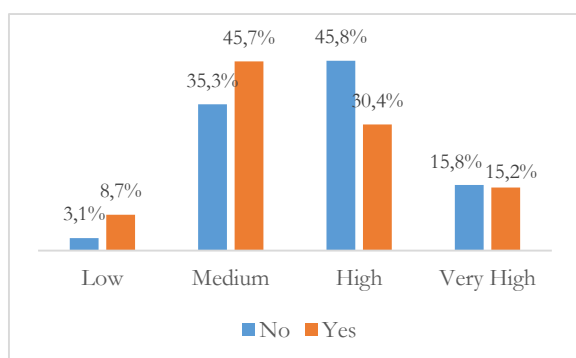


### d) Education

Those individuals who have a medium education are those who are mostly in our sample of consumers with Profile A (63%), but also those who do not predominantly participate in anti-brand communities (72, 1%), this happens because the majority of our sample has this educational level. On the other hand,

individuals with other educational levels have a higher share of participation in anti-brand communities than the opposite (Chart 4).

**Graphic 5:** Empathy of consumers participating in anti-brand communities and individuals not belonging to these communities



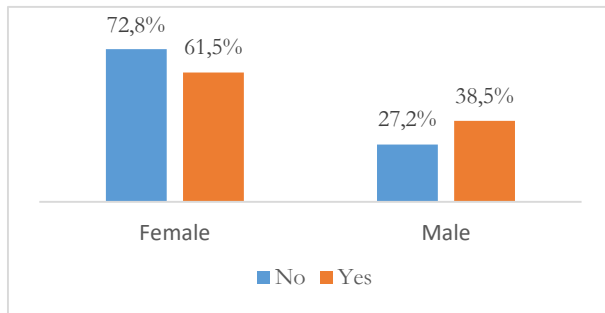
### e) Empathy

This category is most balanced in terms of the percentage of consumers who participate in anti-brand communities by empathic level. Thus, the majority of consumers participating in anti-brand communities consider having an average empathic level (45.7%) (Graph 5).

### Section 3 (Profile B and Profile C)

In this section we will characterize individuals who have negative feelings about brands but do not participate in anti-brand communities and respondents who do not have negative feelings about brands through the profile.

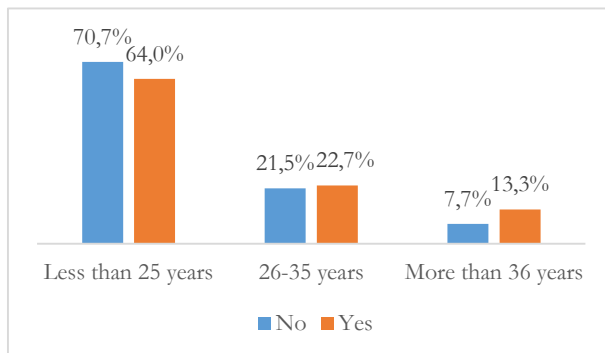
**Graphic 6:** Gender of Individuals with Profile B and Profile C



#### a) Gender

Consumers with Profile B in the majority are female (61.5%). On the other hand, male respondents, proportionally, have more Profile B (38.5%) than Profile C (27.2%) (Graph 6).

**Graphic 7:** Age range of Individuals with Profile B and Profile C

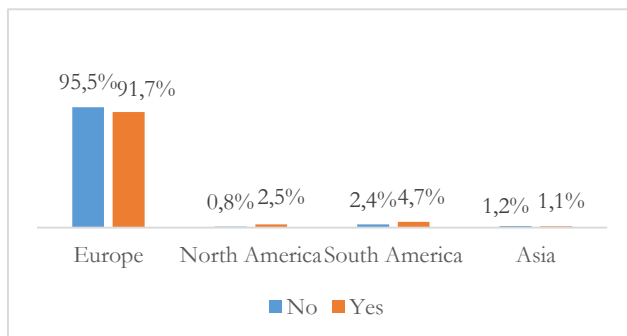


#### a) Age Range

The younger respondents are those who are mostly in Profile B (64%) and Profile C (70.7%), this phenomenon is explained due to section 3 being mostly individuals of this age group. On the other hand, respondents from other age groups have a higher proportion in Profile B than in

Profile C (Graph 7).

**Graphic 8:** Country of Individuals with Profile B and Profile C



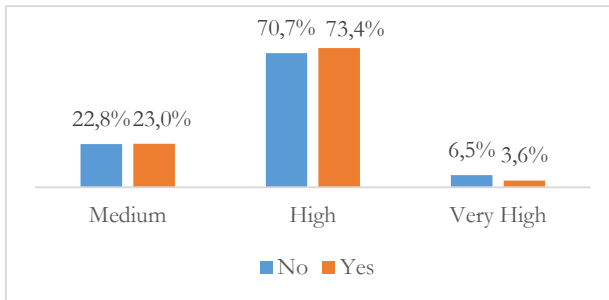
#### b) Country

Most respondents who have negative feelings about brands but do not participate in anti-brand communities come from Europe (91.7%). Just as most people who do not have negative feelings about brands are also European (91, 7%), but it should be

noted that the majority of the sample of Profile B and Profile C respondents are from countries in Europe (Graph 8).

### c) Education

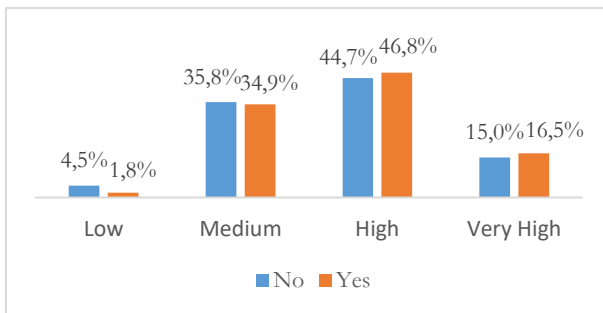
**Graphic 9:** Education of Individuals with Profile B and Profile C



Profile B holds respondents with three different levels of education - 73.4% of respondents who have negative feelings about brands have a high educational level, 23% have a medium level and 3.6% have a very high educational level (Graph 9).

### d) Empathy

**Graphic 10:** Empathy of Individuals with Profile B and Profile C

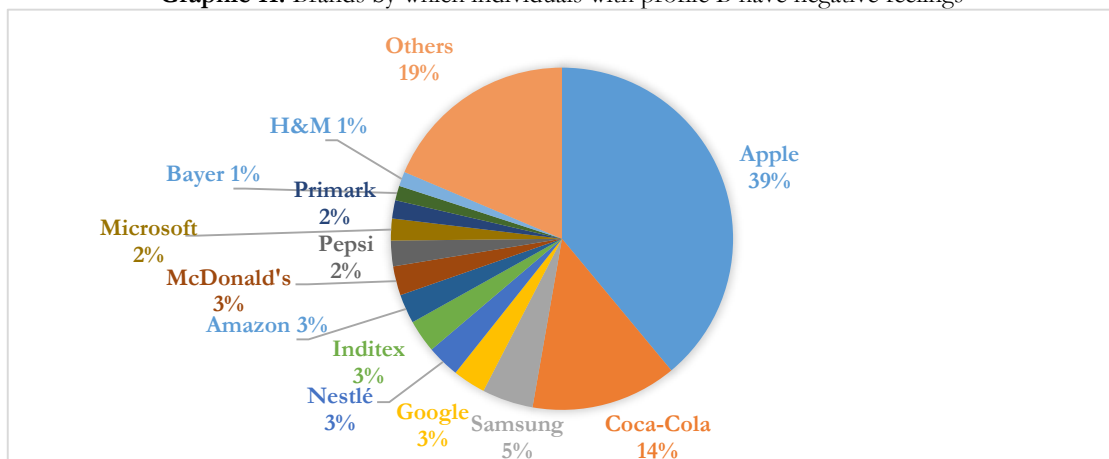


Finally, most consumers with Profile B consider that they have a high level of empathy (46.8%) and average (34.9%), with consumers with Profile C being equally divided in terms of empathic level (Graph 10).

## Section 4 (Profile B)

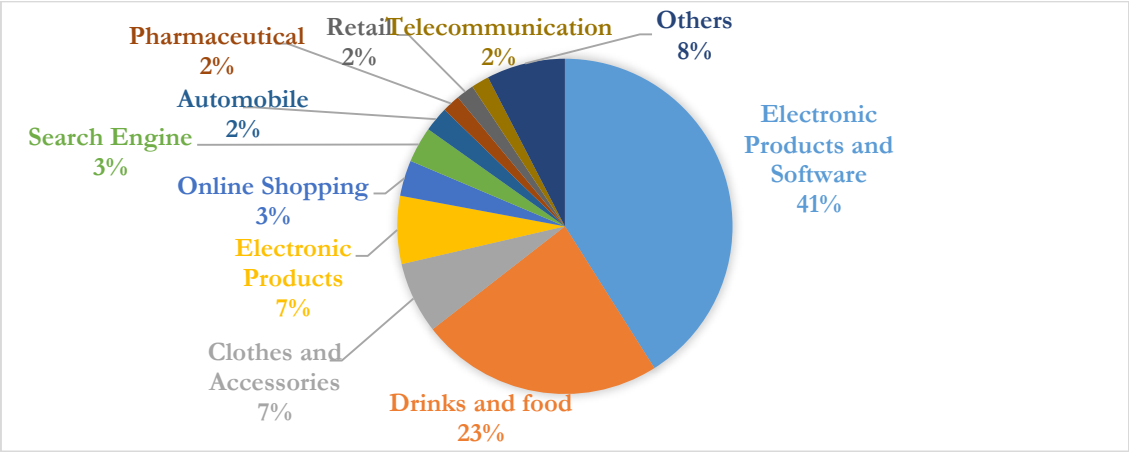
Consumers with Profile B have negative feelings mainly by Apple (39%), Coca-Cola (14%) and Samsung (5%) (Graph 11). In order to simplify the presentation of the results, due to the number of brands suggested by consumers, we added the brands that were less listed (complete data in Annex 2).

**Graphic 11:** Brands by which individuals with profile B have negative feelings



On the other hand, it is also relevant to identify which businesses attract more consumers with negative feelings. Thus, most consumers have negative feelings about companies that produce electronic products and Software (41%), food producers (23%) and producers of clothing and accessories (7%) (Graph 12).

**Graphic 12:** Types of companies by which individuals with profile B have negative feelings

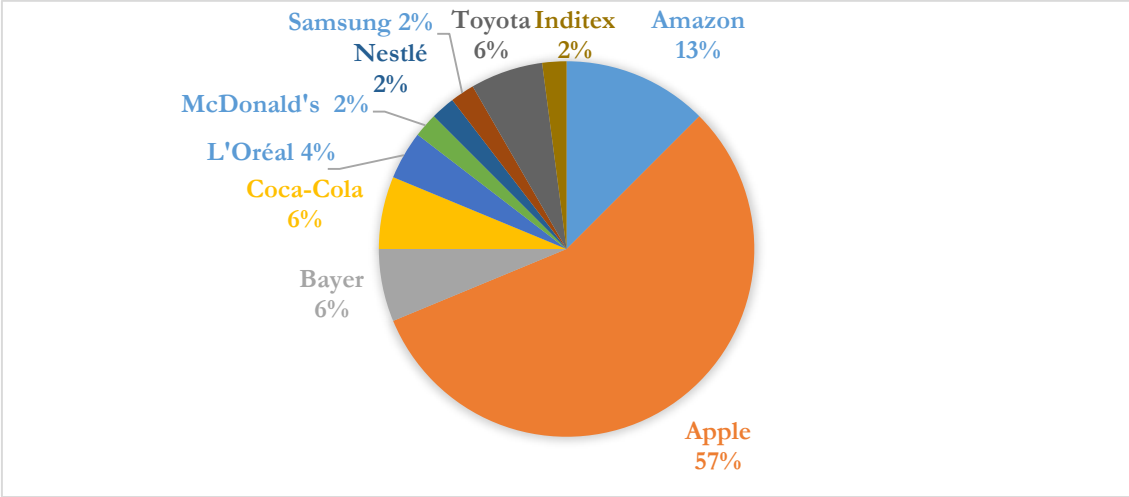


When these individuals are asked which would be the best platform for joining an anti-brand community, most respond that it would be Facebook (51%), then the Website (37%) and finally Instagram (7%).

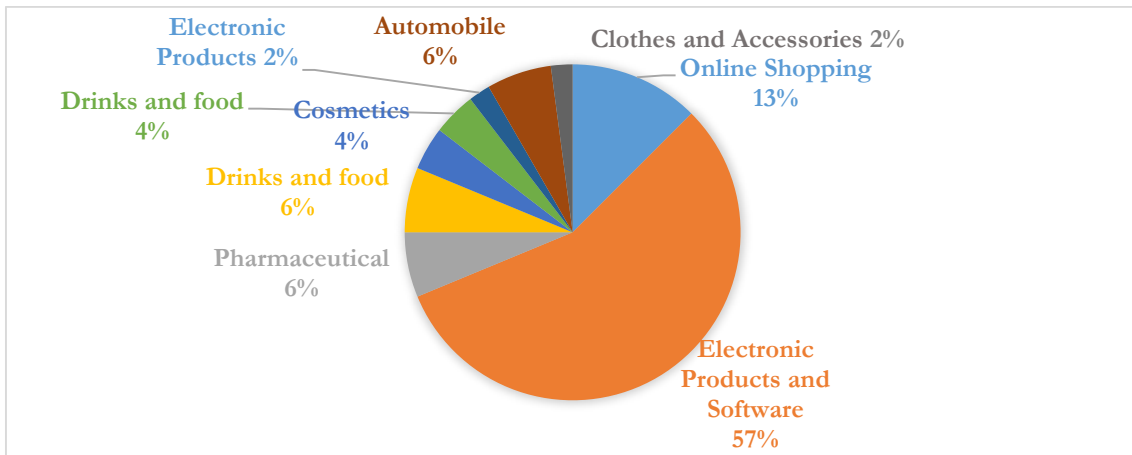
### Section 5 (Profile A)

Most respondents who are integrated into anti-brand communities have negative feelings for Apple (57%), Amazon (13%) and Toyota (6%) (Graph 13). Thus, most of these consumers have negative feelings about companies that produce electronic products and software (57%) and companies that sell products online (13%) (Graph 14). Most of these individuals belong to an anti-brand community on Facebook (91%).

**Graphic 13:** Brands by which individuals with profile A have negative feelings



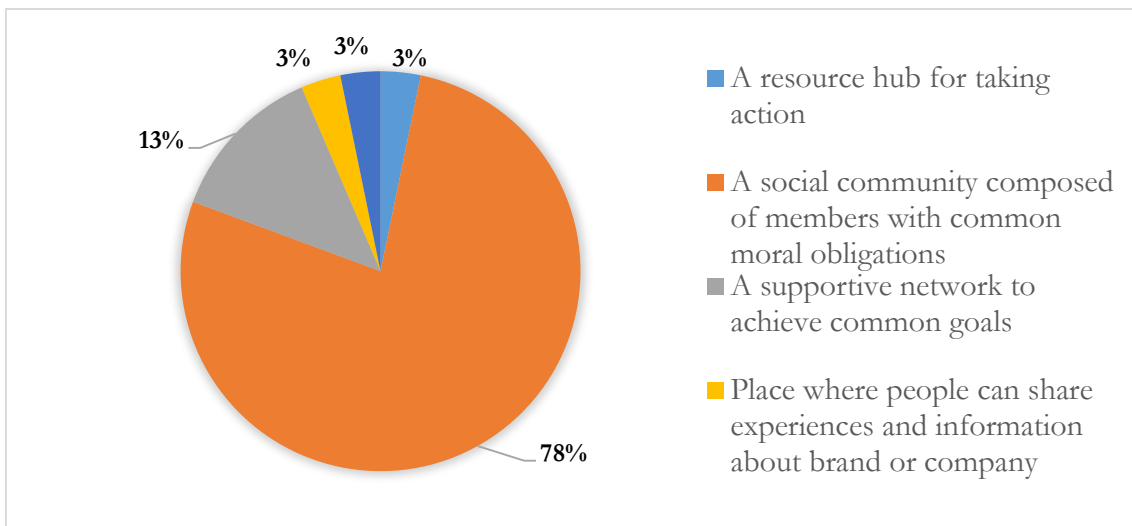
**Graphic 14:** Types of companies by which individuals with profile A have negative feelings



## Section 6 (Profile A)

Almost all individuals in an anti-brand community feel that their members share the same moral obligation in the community (78%), with some respondents feeling that the community is a support network to achieve common goals (13%) (Graph 15). As in this issue individuals could add more options one respondent mentions that in the anti-brand community feels that "To be entertained by the petty grievances of using expensive and still crap quality products".

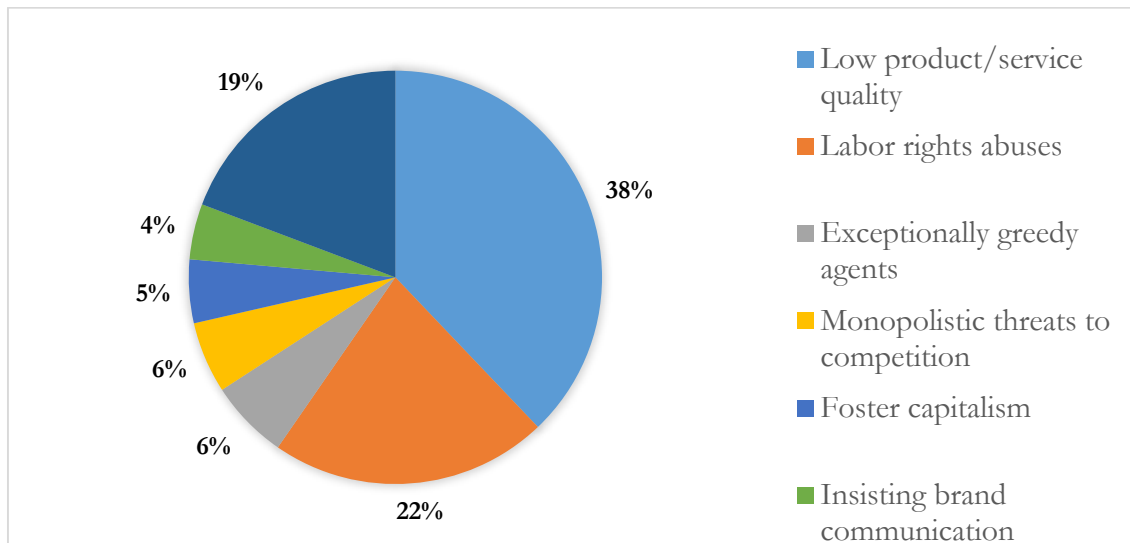
**Graphic 15:** Feelings in anti-brand communities



## Section 7 (Profile A and Profile B)

Most consumers who have negative feelings by the brands (or not participating in anti-brand communities) is due to the low quality of products / services (38%) and abuse of labor rights (22%) (Graph 16). As this question, individuals could also mention other reasons it is interesting to mention that accused the companies do not promote healthy living and conducting tests on animals (complete information in Annex 3).

**Graphic 16:** Reasons why individuals have negative feelings about brands



### Analysis of research hypotheses

We will test the research hypotheses presented earlier. In this way, a series of statistical tests were carried out that allow us to reject the hypotheses under study.

**Hypothesis 1: Consumer profile (a) gender, (b) age, (c) country, (d) education, and (e) empathy) influence the intensity of consumer negative feelings about brands.**

In order to verify if there are significant differences between the characteristics of the profile of the consumer and the feelings that these have for the brands, we used the chi-square test. Thus, the chi-square test allows to test whether the frequency with which the elements of a given sample are divided by the classes of a qualitative variable is random (Marôco, 2014). In this way, we will test this hypothesis for the five components of consumer profile (a) gender, (b) age, (c) country, (d) education, and e) empathy):

- **H0:** Consumers' feelings about brands are independent of the consumer profile.
- **H1:** Consumers' feelings about brands are influenced by the consumer profile.

Thus, for p-values less than 0.05, we reject H0.

**Table 4:** Chi-square test of hypothesis 1

Individual profile	Value	gl	Sig
Gender	7,452	1	0,006
Age Range	4,757	2	0,093
Country	4,235	3	0,217
Education	2,353	2	0,308
Empathy	3,389	3	0,333

Through Table 4 we see that there is only one component of the consumer profile where H0 can be rejected, that is, gender influences the feelings that individuals have about brands.

**Hypothesis 2: Consumer profile (a) gender, b) age, c) country, d) education and e) empathy) influence these to integrate anti-brand communities on the internet.**

In this hypothesis we will use the same test we used in hypothesis 1, that is, we will resort to the chi-square test with a significance level of 5%.

**Table 5:** Chi-square test of hypothesis 2

Individual profile	Value	gl	Sig
Gender	30,236	1	0,001
Age Range	78,474	2	0,001
Country	185,43	3	0,001
Education	3,389	2	0,184
Empathy	7,341	3	0,062

Through Table 5 we verified that the subject's gender, age group and country of origin influence him to participate in anti-brand communities, since the p-value of these components is less than 0.05 (level of significance).

**Hypothesis 3: The more empathic a consumer is, the greater their sense of brand hatred.**

The non-parametric Spearman correlation test was used for this hypothesis. This test was chosen because this hypothesis is clearly an inference of a positive correlation between consumer empathy and the brand's hatred. This test was chosen in detriment of the Pearson test since it does not require any assumption of normal distribution and in addition, it can be used in ordinal variables.

Thus, in the Spearman test the more the variables are close to the edges, that is the closer 1 or -1 is, the greater the correlation between their variables. The closer they are to 1 the greater

the positive correlation between the variables and the closer they are to -1 the greater the negative correlation between the variables. According to the assumptions of this model, so that an association between variables can be certified it is also necessary that the p-value is less than 0.10.

In this way, we will test the more empathic consumers of Profile A and Profile B (we did not use Profile C in this test because these consumers did not have negative feelings about brands) more will hate a brand.

**Table 6:** Spearman correlation test of hypothesis 3

Empathy			
Hate	Profile A	Correlation Coefficient	0,08
		Sig.	0,184
		N	278
	Profile B	Correlation Coefficient	-0,248
		Sig.	0,097
		N	46

Through Table 6 we find that the more empathic consumers are with Profile A the more they hate brands. In contrast to individuals having Profile B, the more empathic the less, they hate the brands. However, according to the assumptions of the Spearman model there is only an association between Profile B and hatred for brands, because p-value is less than 0.10.

**Hypothesis 4: Consumers who consider joining an anti-brand community depend on the intensity of hatred they feel about brands.**

First, it is necessary to verify the normality of the distribution of the variables, thus, the non-parametric Kolmogorov-Smirnov or Shapiro-Wilk tests can be applied. The use of these tests depends on the size of the sample, for samples, less than 50 the appropriate is to use the Shapiro-Wilk test (Marôco, 2014).

Thus, this test can be used to evaluate the following hypotheses:

- H0: The data follow a normal distribution
- H1: Data does not follow a normal distribution

Thus, for p-values less than 0.05 (value that is normally used), we reject H0.



**Table 7:** Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests of hypothesis 4

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov				Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
<b>Have you thought about joining an anti-brand community?</b>	Yes	0,298	19	0,000	0,777	<b>19</b>	<b>0,001</b>
	No	0,180	<b>259</b>	<b>0,000</b>	0,928	259	0,000

As in this model, the p-value for the two variables is lower than 0.05, through the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for the first variable and the Shapiro-Wilk test for the second variable, then it is rejected that the residual hypothesis follow a normal distribution.

Once the normality of these variables was rejected, the Mann-Whitney test was used to test the hypotheses. Thus, this non-parametric test is adequate to compare the distribution functions of a measured variable in two independent samples, even for reduced samples as in this case (Marôco, 2014). Thus, this test is used to validate the following hypotheses:

- H0: The willingness of consumers to join an anti-brand community is independent of their hatred for them.
- H1: The willingness of consumers to join an anti-brand community depends on their hatred for them.

Thus, for p-values less than 0.05 (value that is normally used), we reject H0.

**Table 8:** Mann-Whitney test hypothesis 4

<b>U de Mann-Whitney</b>	1256,000
<b>Wilcoxon W</b>	34926,000
<b>Z</b>	-3,637
<b>Sig. (bilateral)</b>	0,000

P-value is less than 0.05, so we reject H0. In this way, the willingness of consumers to join an anti-brand community depends on the intensity of hatred they feel for brands.

**Hypothesis 5:** Consumers who hate brands the most are those who have an active participation in anti-brand communities.

In order to test the normal distribution of the variables, the non-parametric Shapiro-Wilk test was applied.

**Table 9:** Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests of hypothesis 5

		Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
<b>Do you have an active participation (comments, likes and/or shares) in the anti-brand community that you integrate?</b>	Yes	0,327	33	0,001	0,633	<b>33</b>	<b>0,001</b>
	No	0,213	13	0,111	0,885	<b>13</b>	<b>0,082</b>

Thus, we found that the first variable rejects the hypothesis that the residuals follow a normal distribution ( $0.001 < 0.05$ ), while the second variable does not reject the residuals following a normal distribution ( $0.082 > 0.05$ ).

Marôco (2014) considers that Student's t-test is robust to violation of normality when values of skewness and flatness (Kurtosis) are not very high. Thus, we will use this test to test, whether the means of the two populations are significantly different.

For this, the Levene test was used first, this test allows to verify the existence of homogeneous variances among the samples. Thus, the Levene test considers the following hypotheses:

- **H0:** The variables are not homogenous
- **H1:** The variables are homogenous

Thus, when p-value is higher than 0.05 (the value that is normally used), the variables are homogenous and the significance (bilateral) is analyzed in the first row, otherwise the significance (bilateral) of the second row is analyzed.

This assures the assumption of the homogeneity of the variances, so that we can proceed with the Student's t-test. The application of this is adequate to test if the means of two populations are significantly different (Marôco, 2014).

Thus, using Student's t-test will analyze the following hypotheses:

- **H0:** Consumers taking an active part in anti-brand communities is independent of the intensity of hatred they feel about brands.
- **H1:** Consumers have an active participation in anti-brand communities depending on the intensity of hatred they feel about brands.

Thus, for p-values less than 0.05 (value that is normally used), we reject H0.

**Table 10:** Levene test and T-test of hypothesis 5

Levene test		T-test for equality of averages						95% Confidence Interval of Difference	
	Z	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (bilateral)	Average Difference	Standard error of difference	Less	Superior
<b>Equal variances assumed</b>	0,851	<b>0,361</b>	1,811	44	<b>0,077</b>	0,671	0,371	-0,076	1,419
<b>Equal variances not assumed</b>			1,700	19,52	0,105	0,671	0,395	-0,154	1,496

In this way, it is not possible to reject the hypothesis of active participation in anti-brand communities not to depend on the intensity of hatred that consumers feel about brands.

## Results presentation

This empirical investigation included three sequential and interdependent studies. Thus, in the first study we found that the top ten brands that attract the most anti-brand communities are in descending order: Apple, Google, Coca-Cola, Microsoft, Samsung, IBM, Toyota, GE, Amazon and Mercedes.

Subsequently, in the second study we found that most of the anti-brand communities of the ten strongest brands on the market are focused on social networking, especially Facebook with 275 anti-brand communities. While Twitter holds 69 anti-brand communities, Instagram has 24 such communities, we only find 17 anti-brand sites and there are other platforms on the Internet (Blogs, WordPress, Google Groups, Wikipedia, Google+ and Tumblr) where its members are exclusively dedicated to exposing their feelings against a particular brand.

On the other hand, Apple is the brand that holds more anti-brand communities, with 99 pages specifically created against this brand on the internet. Following Amazon with 66, Samsung with 51, Google with 46 and Microsoft with 42 such communities. In total with this investigation, we found 393 anti-brand communities on the internet. It is evident that the companies that operate in technological areas are those that hold more anti-brand communities within the group of the 10 strongest brands in the market.

In the last and main study of this empirical research, we focus on the main theme, that is, the reasons that lead consumers to integrate anti-brand communities. Thus, we developed an online questionnaire survey where the sample included 570 respondents who have three different profiles - 46 individuals who integrate anti-brand communities (Profile A), 278 respondents who have negative feelings about brands but do not participate in anti-brand communities (Profile B) and 246 individuals who do not have negative feelings about brands (Profile C).

In this questionnaire, we conclude that Apple is the brand that attracts more consumers with negative feelings, having 27 individuals with Profile A and 113 consumers with Profile B. Following Coca-Cola with 40 respondents and Samsung with 14 individuals with Profile B they reveal to deter negative feelings by these marks. While respondents with Profile A reveal they have mostly negative feelings about other brands, with Amazon and Bayer. In this way, companies that provide electronic and software products are those that attract more consumers who do not like them.

The quality of products/services and working conditions are still the reasons that most consumers point out as the cause of negative feelings about brands. However, it is also interesting to note that many consumers genuinely say they do not like brands because they do not promote healthy living habits and use animals to test their products.

Most consumers in an anti-brand community feel that their members share the same moral obligations and that it is a support network to reach their goals.

Thus, in the first hypothesis of this empirical study through the chi-square test for the different variables (a) gender, b) age, c) country, d) education and e) empathy), we verified that gender influences feelings the individuals with Profile B have the marks. While for the other variables it is not possible to conclude the same, because they have a p-value greater than the level of significance and thus we cannot reject  $H_0$  (the feelings that the consumers have for the brands is independent of the profile of the consumer).

In the second hypothesis we also used the chi-square test to test the influence that the different variables (a) gender, b) age, c) country, d) education and e) empathy) have negative feelings that consumers with Profile A by brands. Thus, we find that the individual's gender, age group and country of origin influence the individual to participate in anti-brand communities. While we cannot conclude the same for the variables education and empathy, due to the p-value of these being greater than the level of significance.

In the third hypothesis we investigate that the more empathic a consumer is, the greater his or her hatred for the brand. Through Spearman's non-parametric correlation test, we find the opposite for consumers with Profile B, that is, the more empathic individuals are the less they hate the brands. On the other hand, for consumers with Profile A, we cannot draw conclusions because p-value is less than 0.10.

While in the fourth hypothesis, we conclude that the willingness of consumers with Profile B to join an anti-brand community depends on the intensity of hatred they feel about brands. This hypothesis was first studied through non-parametric Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests, in which the data did not follow a normal distribution. Afterwards we performed the Mann-Whitney test, in which we rejected  $H_0$  (the desire of consumers to integrate an anti-brand community is independent of the hatred they feel for them).

Finally, in the fifth hypothesis we first study the normality of the sample data through the non-parametric Shapiro-Wilk test. We then used the Levene test to study the existence of homogeneous variances between samples and then the t-student test to test whether the

means of two populations are significantly different. Since p-value is above the level of significance, we cannot reject that the active participation of consumers in anti-brand communities is independent of the intensity of hatred they feel for brands.

## Conclusions

Negative emotions play an important role in consumer relationships with brands (Aaker, 1996; Fournier & Alvarez, 2013). However, the empirical studies on negative brand feelings are still scarce compared to the importance of this theme for management (Krishnamurthy & Kucuk, 2009; Zarantonello et al., 2016).

With the democratization of the Internet market power has been balanced, mainly due to its impact on information asymmetry between consumers and businesses (Krishnamurthy & Kucuk, 2007). Through the eWOM phenomenon, the opinion of potential, actual or former customers about a product or a company usually produces more influence over other individuals than the companies' own communication actions (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). The increasing popularity of social networks has increased the scale of this phenomenon, where individuals play a role as co-creators of brand content (Brodie et al., 2011).

In recent years, consumers who have negative feelings about brands have begun to organize in anti-brand communities on the Internet, opposing brands in an organized and transnational way (Bailey, 2004; Krishnamurthy & Kucuk, 2009). Thus, if members of anti-brand communities and their public reach a significant level the company's sales and brand value may be potentially affected (Kucuk, 2010).

As the phenomenon of anti-brand communities on the internet is so relevant to management, one would expect that there would be several current empirical studies to address this issue, but academic research has not yet discovered the nature of these sites and the impact they have on consumption (Krishnamurthy & Kucuk, 2009).

Thus, this theoretical investigation focused on the anti-brand communities on the Internet, especially on the reasons that lead consumers to integrate anti-brand communities on the internet. Thus, in order to reach the main objective of this empirical study we need to divide this research into three sequences and interdependent studies.

In the first study we find the brands that attract more anti-brand communities, using the method of Kucuk (2008b). Through our research, we find that the brands that attract the most anti-brand communities today are in descending order: Apple, Google, Coca-Cola, Microsoft, Samsung, IBM, Toyota, GE, Amazon and Mercedes. In this way, we conclude that the paradigm of the strongest brands in the market has changed since 2008, as we had assumed.

While in the second study of this investigation, we find the anti-brand communities of the ten strongest companies in the market. In this way, we also apply the methodology that Kucuk (2008b) used in the empirical study "Negative double jeopardy: the role of anti-brand sites on the internet". We conclude that anti-brand communities on the Internet are centered on social networks, mostly on Facebook. Thus, we contract the assumption that anti-brand communities are concentrated on anti-brand sites (Kucuk, 2008b, 2010).

Looking at the number of anti-brand communities that each brand holds, we conclude that Apple is the most powerful brand in the world and with more anti-brand communities (Kucuk, 2008b). On the other hand, we find that some of the brands we evaluate have few anti-brand communities, such as IBM. This may be explained by the fact that increased consumer engagement with brands is more significant for hedonic brands than for functional brands (Hollebeek, 2013).

For the third study, we used the online questionnaire survey method. Thus, through the analysis of the sample, we conclude that although the brand image has a great impact on consumers' feelings about brands (Mabkhot et al., 2017). The quality of products/services and working conditions are still the reasons that most consumers point out as the cause of negative feelings about brands (Hollenbeck & Zinkhan, 2006; Kozinets & Handelman, 2004; Romani et al., 2015; Smith et al., 2010). We conclude that most consumers in an anti-brand community feel that their members share the same moral obligations and that it is a support network to achieve their goals (Awasthi et al., 2012).

In this way, this study includes five hypotheses of investigation that revealed characteristics of the consumers that integrate anti-brand communities. Thus, we conclude that gender, the age group of the consumer and the country of origin influence consumers to have negative feelings about brands. In this way, the demographic variables influence the profile of the consumer (Hofstede & McCrae, 2004).

We also conclude that the more empathic individuals are, the less they hate brands, undermining the assumption that the more empathic a consumer is, the more likely they will be to participate in anti-brand moves. However, it is necessary to consider that the respondents themselves were evaluating their level of empathy.

Finally, we conclude that consumers' willingness to join an anti-brand community depends on the intensity of hatred they feel about brands. Thus, consumers who hate brands the most are integrated into anti-brand communities (Kucuk, 2008b, 2010; Zarantonello et al., 2016).



## **Contributions to management**

Currently consumers' negative brand feelings strongly affect the brand image and value. In this way, individuals are no longer passive to the ambitious strategies of brands; they organize themselves in anti-brand communities in order to boycott the malicious attitudes of brands. When these communities reach the significant level of members, they are able to impact corporate profits through eWOM.

Thus, with this investigation, we conclude that the quality of products / services and labor practices are still the reasons that influence consumers in a most impacting way in order to have negative feelings about brands. Thus, management has to provide products with a balanced price-quality ratio, taking care of the entire buying process. It is necessary for Human Resources departments to be able to perceive consumers' feelings about brands. It was also explicit from the research that individuals are concerned with healthy living habits and animal rights, and companies need to establish strategies that show that they are also concerned about these phenomena.

Also through this investigation, it was clear that the demographic variables influence the profile of the consumer, mainly the negative feelings that the individuals hold for the brands. Thus, companies need to develop communication strategies for groups of people who normally develop more negative brand feelings.

Finally, consumers' willingness to join an anti-brand community depends on the intensity of hatred they feel for brands. Thus, companies before attempting to tackle the problem of anti-brand communities on the Internet should focus on counteracting the hatred consumers feel about brands. Once management is committed to resolving this phenomenon, the willingness of consumers to integrate into anti-brand communities will diminish.

## **Limitations of research**

The present research study focused on the phenomenon of anti-brand communities on the internet, mainly on the reasons that lead some consumers to integrate these communities. As is evident in the literature, the available investigations on this subject are already outdated and very scarce. In this way, our research was very limited in terms of available literature.

Anti-brand communities are quite closed groups, where they discuss related issues about a particular brand and some of its members work in those companies. Thus, it is clear that it is very difficult to establish contact with these individuals, which affected the sample size of the respondents that integrate the anti-brand communities. In this way, this study had this great limitation, which affected the quantitative investigation and its conclusions.

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# Attachments

## Annex 1: Questionnaire

### Anti-Brand Communities

This questionnaire is part of an academic study of the Master in Service Management of the Faculdade de Economia do Porto. Its purpose is to study the consumers' motivations to integrate anti-brand committees.

Read all the instructions carefully and answer the questions according to your reality. There are no right or wrong answers.

Your participation will be anonymous and full confidentiality will be guaranteed when processing the data provided.

I count on your cooperation!

### Section 1

Gender:

☐ Female

☐ Male

What is your age range?

☐ Less than 25 years

☐ 26 years - 35 years

☐ More than 35 years

What country do you live in?

☐ England

☐ France

☐ Germany

☐ India

☐ Iran

☐ Japan

☐ Portugal

☐ Russia

☐ South Africa

☐ United States of America

☐ Other...

Educational Level:

☐ Low

☐ Medium



☐ High

☐ Very High

Do you consider yourself an empathic person with the problems of others?

Nothing

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

☐ 4

☐ 5

☐ 6

Totally

empathic

empathetic

## Section 2

What is an Anti-brand community?

An anti-brand community on the Internet describes itself as a group of individuals around a particular brand, nurturing a negative feeling about it, allocating itself on the internet platforms (sites, social networks and among others). They discuss the failures committed by the brand and create a sharing environment among themselves.

Do you participate in any anti-brand community?

☐ Yes

☐ No

## Section 3

Do you have negative feelings about any brand?

☐ Yes

☐ No

## Section 4

What is this brand?

☐ Apple

☐ Google

☐ Coca-Cola

☐ Microsoft

☐ Samsung

☐ IBM

☐ Toyota

☐ GE

☐ Amazon

☐ Mercedes

☐ Other...

How much do you hate that brand?

I do not hate ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 I totally hate

Have you thought about joining an anti-brand community?

☐ Yes

☐ No

What platform would you choose to join an anti-brand community?

☐ Website

☐ Facebook

☐ Instagram

☐ Twitter

☐ Other...

## Section 5

Think of the brand you have negative feelings about!

What is this brand?

☐ Apple

☐ Google

☐ Coca-Cola

☐ Microsoft

☐ Samsung

☐ IBM

☐ Toyota

☐ GE

☐ Amazon

☐ Mercedes

☐ Other...

Where do you integrate the anti-brand community?

☐ Website

☐ Facebook

☐ Instagram

☐ Twitter

☐ Other...

How much do you hate that brand?

I do not hate ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 I totally hate

## Section 6

Think of the brand you have negative feelings about!

Do you have an active participation (comments, likes and/or shares) in the anti-brand community that you integrate?

☐ Yes

☐ No

What do you feel an anti-brand community is?

You can choose more than one option!

☐ A social community composed of members with common moral obligations

☐ A supportive network to achieve common goals

☐ A way of coping with workplace difficulties

☐ A resource hub for taking action

☐ Other...

## Section 7

Why do you have negative feelings about that brand?

You can choose more than one option!

☐ Low product/service quality

☐ Inefficient purchasing process

☐ Lack of brand identification

☐ Insisting brand communication

☐ Labor rights abuses

☐ Monopolistic threats to competition

☐ Morally bankrupt actors

☐ Exceptionally greedy agents

☐ Foster capitalism

☐ Other...

## Annex 2: Brands by which respondents with Profile B have negative feelings

What is this brand?	Type of business	Number of consumers	Percentage
Apple	Electronic Products and Software	113	39,0%
Coca-Cola	Drinks and food	40	13,8%
Samsung	Electronic Products	14	4,8%
Google	Search Engine	9	3,1%
Inditex	Clothes and Accessories	9	3,1%
Nestlé	Drinks and food	9	3,1%
Amazon	Online Shopping	8	2,8%
McDonald's	Drinks and food	8	2,8%
Pepsi	Drinks and food	7	2,4%
Microsoft	Electronic Products and Software	6	2,1%
Primark	Clothes and Accessories	5	1,7%
Bayer	Pharmaceutical Products	4	1,4%
H&M	Clothes and Accessories	4	1,4%
Meo	Telecommunication Services	3	1,0%
Nike	Shoes and Sportswear	3	1,0%
BP	Oilfield	2	0,7%
Continente	Retail	2	0,7%
Johnson & Johnson	Hygiene Products	2	0,7%
Mercedes	Automobile Industry	2	0,7%
Nutella	Drinks and food	2	0,7%
Ryanair	Airline	2	0,7%
Toyota	Automobile Industry	2	0,7%
Vodafone	Telecommunication	2	0,7%
Acer	Electronic Products	1	0,3%
Alcatel	Electronic Products	1	0,3%
Benetton	Clothes and Accessories	1	0,3%
Colgate	Hygiene Products	1	0,3%
DANONE	Drinks and food	1	0,3%
DIA	Retail	1	0,3%
Ebay	Online Shopping	1	0,3%
EDP	Energy Sector	1	0,3%
Galp	Energy Sector	1	0,3%
Geek vape	Tobacco Industry	1	0,3%
Knorr	Drinks and food	1	0,3%
Lancia	Automobile	1	0,3%
L'Oréal	Cosmetics	1	0,3%
Morphe	Cosmetics	1	0,3%
OLX	Online Shopping	1	0,3%

<b>Pingo Doce</b>	Retail	1	0,3%
<b>Reebok</b>	Shoes and Sportswear	1	0,3%
<b>Renault</b>	Automobile Industry	1	0,3%
<b>Santander Totta</b>	Bank	1	0,3%
<b>Shell</b>	Oilfield	1	0,3%
<b>Sony</b>	Electronic Products	1	0,3%
<b>Starbucks</b>	Coffee Shop	1	0,3%
<b>The Body Shop</b>	Cosmetics	1	0,3%
<b>Tommy Hilfiger</b>	Clothes and Accessories	1	0,3%
<b>Too Faced</b>	Cosmetics	1	0,3%
<b>Toshiba</b>	Electronic Products	1	0,3%
<b>TVI</b>	TV Channel	1	0,3%
<b>Unilabs</b>	Pharmaceutical	1	0,3%
<b>Volkswagen</b>	Automobile Industry	1	0,3%
<b>WalMart</b>	Retail	1	0,3%
<b>Wiko</b>	Electronic Products	1	0,3%
<b>Yahoo</b>	Search Engine	1	0,3%

### **Annex 3: Reasons that lead consumers to have negative feelings about brands**

<b>Why do you have negative feelings about that brand?</b>	<b>Number of consumers</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Low product/service quality</b>	61	37,9%
<b>Labor rights abuses</b>	35	21,7%
<b>Exceptionally greedy agents</b>	10	6,2%
<b>Monopolistic threats to competition</b>	9	5,6%
<b>Foster capitalism</b>	8	5,0%
<b>Insisting brand communication</b>	7	4,3%
<b>Agressive communication</b>	4	2,5%
<b>Inefficient purchasing process</b>	4	2,5%
<b>Lack of brand identification</b>	4	2,5%
<b>They are promoting negative lifestyle/eating habits</b>	4	2,5%
<b>They do tests on animals</b>	4	2,5%
<b>Expensive product for the performance</b>	3	1,9%
<b>Morally bankrupt actors</b>	3	1,9%
<b>Destroys the environment</b>	2	1,2%
<b>Chemical composition of the products</b>	1	0,6%
<b>Incompetent and untrained employees</b>	1	0,6%
<b>Political reasons</b>	1	0,6%